

Jan. 10 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

a good job. And I think the people who came from Israel and from Syria really are trying to make a difference. So if they want to do it bad enough and they're willing to sort of take a chance on a totally different future, they can get there. And I certainly hope they will, and I'm still quite hopeful.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. You said you were hopeful with the Palestinian talks?

The President. Oh, very, yes.

Q. For next month?

The President. Yes. I'm quite hopeful there, too. Mr. Arafat is coming here in a few days, and I'm quite hopeful.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:45 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House, prior to his departure for Annapolis, MD. In his remarks, he referred to Elian Gonzalez, rescued off the coast of Florida on November 25, 1999, whose custody the Immigration and Naturalization Service decided in favor of his Cuban father; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority.

Remarks at Funeral Services for Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., in Annapolis, Maryland *January 10, 2000*

Mouza, Ann, Mouzetta, Jim, James, Saralee, all the members of this wonderful family, and in the words of Ambassador Lader, this extended family: Hillary and I are honored to be here today to join in praising, remembering, and cherishing the life of a man who was our friend and whose love for his family, his Nation, and his Navy were as deep as the oceans he sailed.

Listening to Phil Lader talk about how Bud and Mouza first met brought back so many old memories to me and to those of us who had the privilege to listen to Bud Zumwalt tell that story. I became convinced that it was the reverse of the fish story, that every time he's told it, she said yes in a shorter and shorter amount of time. [*Laughter*]

The last time I was in this magnificent chapel was to say goodbye to another great admiral of the 20th century, Arleigh Burke. When our historians look back on the century we have just left, they may well record that Arleigh Burke was the spirit of the United States Navy; they will certainly recall that Bud Zumwalt was its conscience.

As much as any other leader in our entire history, Americans could always count on Bud Zumwalt to do the right thing. The midshipmen here learn a lot about honor, commitment, and courage. All his life, he exemplified those virtues. His bravery in World War II, in Korea, what he did in Vietnam, his physical courage and leadership led him to become the youngest

Chief of Naval Operations in our history. But beyond his physical courage, Bud Zumwalt stood out for his moral courage and for saying what he thought was right, regardless of the consequences.

He sailed through rough waters more than once. We heard Dick Schifter so eloquently chronicle his work in the 1970's to bring back the Navy's strength. When he issued his famous Z-grams, he knew that he was taking on more than 200 years of Navy tradition. But because he took the heat, thousands of naval leaders like former Secretary John Lehman have said they actually made the decision to stay in the Navy because Bud Zumwalt made the Navy exciting again.

When we struggled through the racial tensions of the sixties and seventies, he worked in the face of wilting criticism and a highly resistant institutional culture to make the Navy do the right thing and make the Navy one of the most colorblind institutions in our entire Nation. I know it was a special point of pride for him that the very first African-American admiral earned his star on Bud Zumwalt's watch.

At a time when morale and enthusiasm were at an all-time low, he had the vision to see a great future for the Navy. And even though he lived just to see 2 days of this new century, the changes he brought about three decades ago will continue to shape the character and

culture of our Navy for a long time in the 21st century.

Many people have commented on this today, but I want to give you a personal example. Of all the things he inspired, perhaps the greatest impact he had was on the ordinary men and women who served under him. We all know he originally intended to go to West Point, and then a whaling captain set his sails straight. The men and women of the Navy always knew that Bud Zumwalt had their backs, and that loyalty went both ways.

This week we have seen an astonishing outpouring of love and affection from those who served with Admiral Zumwalt. Many of them are here today. This morning, when I was putting on my necktie and getting ready to go out for the day, my naval steward, who has been a Navy enlisted man for more than 30 years, said, "Mr. President, today you're going to Admiral Zumwalt's service, aren't you?" I said, "Yes, I am." He looked at me and smiled, and he said, "He's the best we ever had. He was for us."

He also never forgot to live by the consequences of his commitments. I know there was a family from South Vietnam that was sent after the end of the war to America as refugees, as so many were, and they were sent to my home State of Arkansas. To stay, they were told they had to know someone from our country. The only name they knew was Admiral Zumwalt. When Bud was contacted, to their surprise, the family was actually put on a plane, not to the admiral's home in Maryland but to his son's home in North Carolina, because the admiral already had other refugee families living in his house and he didn't have any more room. When Bud Zumwalt made a commitment, he stuck with it. And when it didn't work out exactly as planned, he honored the consequences and lived by them.

Perhaps the most famous consequence of his leadership during the Vietnam era was the painful loss of his son, Elmo, from the use of Agent

Orange, which clearly he ordered because he believed it would save the lives of our people in uniform. So he lived with the consequences of life's greatest loss. He dedicated himself to fighting for those with illnesses caused by Agent Orange.

Hillary and I were honored to work with him to provide treatment and payments to those who survived. He also established the first national bone marrow donor program to help cancer patients in need. He worked with me to pass the Chemical Weapons Convention, which was truly historic in that it outlawed chemical weapons. And for his service to our Navy and afterward, it was my great honor to present him with America's highest civilian award, the Medal of Freedom.

What I want you to know, Mouza, is that he gave me something and Hillary something even more valuable: honest, caring, steadfast friendship. His letter to our daughter about what her parents tried to do for America is one of our family's most cherished possessions. It is the symbol of everything he was as a man, a leader, and a friend.

And so today we say goodbye to the sailor who never stopped serving his country, never stopped fighting for the men and women in uniform, never stopped being the conscience of the Navy. His earthly voyage is now done. And now he sails beyond the farthest horizon, out of the home port where at last he is safe from all storms.

Bud, we miss you, we love you still, and we will never, ever forget you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:06 p.m. in the U.S. Naval Academy Chapel. In his remarks, he referred to Admiral Zumwalt's wife, Mouza, daughters Ann F. Coppola and Mouza C. Zumwalt-Weathers, son James G. Zumwalt II, brother James G. Zumwalt, and sister Saralee Crowe; former U.N. Ambassador for Human Rights Richard Schifter; and former Secretary of the Navy John Lehman.